Mr. Weinberg,

I don't blame you for not taking a collect call from Clay Bertrand, I wouldn't accept a collect call from Santa Claus or the Easter Bunny or anything else that didn't exist, either. I'm not selling you a pig, Mr. W.; I'm selling you a poke. The call was just to size you up and offer a miniature, freebie rapport. There is no way I am going to waste either your money or my time until we have established just exactly what it is we are going to ~~discuss~~ in the first place. Consider me a salesman. Here is my sample case. waste ~~this~~ query

First of all I feel I possess the biographical and experiential criteria of Clay Bertrand; and before this letter is over I will encapsule and display this criteria and offer ~~at least the framework of a~~ a basis for at least minimum verification ~~for~~ of these credentials.

Secondly I feel that I possess such a broad range of acquaintanceship within the New Orleans underworld and overworld of the early 60's that I am in a ~~advantageous~~ position with not only Oswald, but with at least 10 other individuals, both public and private, who were involved with the Dealey Plaza conspiracy; and that this broad range of acquaintanceships plus the rather precarious but unique position of being investigative

the 'true' Clay Bertrand has placed me in contact with so many covert figures also, that I have formed some hot leads concerning:

a) the Dealey Plaza second gunman who fired a pistol from the bushes atop the white balustrade adjoining Dealey Plaza and the grassy knoll; plus

b) the chief tactical coordinator of this operation, that mysteriously unidentified C I A operative which appeared anonymously before congressional committee; otherwise, alias Maurice Bishops.

I know this sounds like second selling 20th sounds like a tall order, Mr. Weisberg, and, indeed, it is so tall that until we get the first item out of the way of argument we aren't going to touch at all on the second item or the third or the fourth that follows it, either.

But in the spirit of merely presenting a sample case, Mister Weisberg, let me assure you that if we ever reach agreement on items one and two, the third item will be a plausible, parsimoniously easy explanation of just what 'went wrong' at Dealey Plaza; and that an acceptance of number three would lead to the tightly reasoned, though as yet unheard of, theory that the death of JFK at Dealey Plaza had been never printed,

a mistake and that the sole intended target had been John Connally alone.

Needless to say, Mr. Wiesberg, it would have been expensive and tedious to cram even the framework of this "gift list" into a single long distance call. Like I said, you did us both ~~right~~ a favor in refusing.

So I'm not going to touch on items two, three, or four. The rest of this letter will concern itself with item one above. Let me ask you to pause for a moment in reading this letter and close your eyes and try to re-visualize ~~x~~ file 75 of the Warren Commission long enough to conjure yourself up a subjective view of that entity known as Clay Bertrand and compare that vision to the following set of autobiographical parameters.

The Clay Bertrand I offer you, Mister Wiesberg, is a tall, blond, 1963-young, wildly raffish quasi-attorney whose hobby ~~was~~ representing degenerates and whose vocation was as a computer expert for a Michoud-based NASA contractor; and who holds reputations as being an eccentric genius and ~~world~~ notoriety of being an alcoholic communist and holds record of possessing Q-clearance from the Atomic Energy Commission. Close enough?; for openers?.

Secondly let me offer you the following

set of experiential parameters which appear in inverse order of both chronology and pertinence:

a) an October 1963 adoption of the alias Clay Marchand; and

b) an August 1963 steering of Oswald to an attorney who was the business partner of Stephen Bothwell who was Dean Andrews defence attorney at his 1960 perjury trial; and most importantly,

c) a July 1963 ~~conversation~~ with Lee Harvey Oswald in a ~~conversation~~ dialogue encompassing the elements:
   i) a shared loyalty to Fidel Castro;
   ii) Dallas in general and a building adjacent to Dealey Plaza in particular;
   iii) an assault both murderous and comic upon the person of John F. Kennedy;
   iv) an upstairs window, sniper's vantage point, and
   v) triangulation of fire.

Without insulting you with the obvious, Mr. Wesberg, let me underline the ~~parallel~~ uncanny parallels between these elements and those offered by Garrison at Clay Shaw's 1968 conspiracy trial. If you do so I am sure that you must come to the conclusion that ~~Gar~~ either I do indeed hold a whole lot in a razor

with Clay Bertrand or that there was almost a supernatural amount of coincidence here or - always of course hypothetically possible - that I am lying. I cannot offer you any illumination at all on the first two feasibilities, but everything I further say will concern itself with the issue of credibility. I offer you first the verification of detailed verisimilitude. I maintain that the 7/63 conversation between Oswald and I contained the following specific elements.

Oswald and I met at the Katzenjammer Bar. We were introduced by the proprietor. He introduced Oswald as what sounded like Al Heydel.
He said A.J. Lee was renting office space upstairs.
Oswald was drinking whiskey on the rocks and was wearing an expensive sweater and cheap slacks and penny loafers.
Oswald and I discussed a book called Castro on Cuba and he showed signs of having read the book and of being eloquently knowledgable of Castro's marxist revolution.
Oswald recognized my Richard security badge and exhibited desire for similar employment.
Oswald displayed facility in the solution of 'number series' questions which I offered as sample of the Richard Extrasensory Exam.

Oswald said he had 'taken a lot of these tests in the service.'
Oswald asked where I lived and when I told him and reversed the question he said he lived 'in a ratty apartment out Magazine (st).'

Oswald asked me where I was from and when I told him Dallas Texas he volunteered that he was, coincidentally, from nearby Ft. Worth himself.

I talked extensively of Dallas politicians, athletes, and underworld figures and Oswald didn't seem to be interested in a word I said.
I mentioned that I worked for the Dallas Post Office in the Terminal annex (which abuts Dealey Plaza) and Oswald didn't seem interested in that either.
I attempted to back out of the Texas conversation gracefully and told Al I see that chances were ~~are~~ we wouldn't have any recognizable, mutual Texas aquaintence because when I lived in Texas I went by an alias.
I told Oswald that 'while I was in Dallas I went by the alias John Michael Bowers.'
Oswald told me that this was a coincidence because when he lived in Texas he used an alias too. Oswald told me that 'when I lived in Ft. Worth I went by the alias Lee Harvey Oswald.'

"Oh!," I exclaimed to Oswald, "then you're the guy who defected to Russia, aren't you?"

Oswald was impressed, indeed stunned at my knowledge.

I told Oswald that I recognized his name because I had read it in a Dallas Morning and that I had been favorably impressed at his brave stand and, that "you were one of my heros."

Oswald quickly let me know that he didn't want to talk about Russia and that "they (the USSR) have their problems and we (the USA) have our problems too."

I form the guess that Oswalds' sweater is Krakelian wool and that he purchased it in Baku. Oswald says yes to both guesses and presents a demeanor of increased respect.

With eyes narrowed Oswald shows retention of the sound of my Texas alias and asks, "say, you aren't any kin to Francis Gary Powers, are you?"

I say no, but that maybe my north Georgia stepfather was.

Oswald pays for a round of drinks and apologizes for waiting so long to do so and says that he is "on short money," and that the "only reason I am out drinking tonight is because my wife is out of town."

Oswald orders beer because it is cheaper,

I surreptitiously swap beers with Oswald by means of confusing the bartender when he delivered them. It is and was my belief that I was getting LSD mickeys in my brew and I wished to spread the joy around and it is my conviction that I was successful in my endeavor.
As Oswald begins to get loose we begin to discuss theoretical marxism. We center in on a criticism of Earl Browder and Gus Hall and form agreement that an 'apple-pie' american communist party independent of soviet alliances is just what this benighted hemisphere is in need of. Also I said, it begins to become apparent that Oswald's consciousness has been expanded. It also becomes apparent that we have been 'speaking for a wire' too.
Jack Martin comes downstairs from Guy Banister's office. He is wearing a wool skullcap and a furrowed brow. He passes up several barstools and plumps himself down beside Oswald. Oswald recedes. I catch the hint. I stop talking about the Great American Revolution and go to the men's room. Oswald looks almost grateful. When I get back Jack Martin is gone.
Oswald gets nasty. Oswald starts talking like a drunk Texas Aggie. For no rational reason whatsoever he switches the conversation to John F. Kennedy. He says he'd like to kill him.

I get upset internally. I had sort of liked Oswald and what he now speaks of is of such a dangerously seditious creed that I feel almost trapped in any reply I make. I start off sputteringly. I offer some weak stuff about Kennedy's domestic good outweighing his foreign evils and how Lyndon Johnson would be worse anyway. It's like talking to a post. Oswald goes on ranting and raving about killing Kennedy and how anybody who calls himself a Marxist ought to agree ~~this~~ with him.

Oswald sort of pisses me off. I decide to give him a dose of his own medicine.

"Lee," I say firmly, "let me tell you a little story about Switzerland back in the days of William Tell. Back in those days Germany conquered Switzerland and the German Emperor rode through the streets of Berne. From an overhanging window a Swiss patriot tossed a bladder of goats blood in the Emperor's lap and this was the last time a German Emperor dared to ride in triumph through Swiss streets."

"Yo, Lee," I continue, "let's not talk about killing Kennedy; killing Kennedy wouldn't do Castro a bit of good anyway; let's ~~throw a bladder of goats~~ teach Kennedy a lesson; let's throw a bladder of goats' blood in Kennedy's lap."

Oswald said not another word. ~~Oswald to~~
Oswald staggered out into the darkness.

And that's it, Mister Weisberg, and if you'll allow me the redundancy of emphasis, that this conversation opened with i) our admiration of Castro, and ii) a tangential reference to Dealey Plaza, and iii) an assault (or pair of assaults) on the person of John F. Kennedy, and iv) an upstairs window sniper's vantage point, and v) by our conflictingly suggested methods of assault, triangulation of fire; I'll then make my claim that my tale fits the bill of a Clay Bertrand/ala Perry Russo to a rather startling tee.

But it does nothing to prove what I say is ~~was~~ true or not.

That's the reason for my great detail and such detail entails a challenge too. It is my challenge, Mister Weisberg, that I am capable of passing a polygraph test not only on the generalities of whether I spoke to Oswald or not, but, more impressively, on each and every element that I have listed above.

And, if you would then remain so much of a doubting Thomas as to feel that I might be one of those slippery rogues who is a skilfully pathological liar

I would be most most happy to repeat the same skier, under the influence of Sodium ~~Be~~ Benothal, too. I like the High Five. I could give you some stuff under the High Five that would curl your hair. Also might very well and ~~would~~ lead you into an easy acceptance of my offered items Two, Three, and Four too.

So please accept my 7 PM call this ~~Wed~~ Tuesday the Third. See Why, Mr. Weisberg, the absolute worst you could do is waste half a saw buck on an amusing tryde... and what else should you expect the true Clay Bertrand to be?

Sincerely Yours,

Michael M. Smith

Z. Bertrand
c/o A. Claus
66 Toothfairy Dr
N. Pole, Ur 000000

BATON ROUGE, LA
PM
30 MAY
1986
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